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DELHI MUSEUMS

AT A GLANCE

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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DELHI MUSEUMS AT A GLANCE

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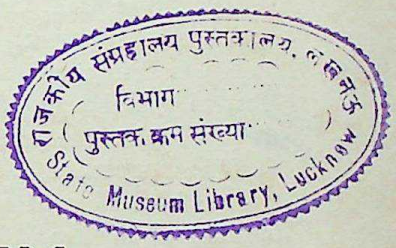

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

Grace Morley

The National Museum, New Delhi, opened the first unit of its own building in December, 1960. From their temporary exhibition place, the Darbar Hall and adjacent rooms of the Rashtrapati Bhavan it had transferred its collections, as soon as the building was completed, and installed them in the new galleries on Janpath, just south of Rajpath, through four and a half months of intensive planning and work. During the five years since this opening, the task of bringing a large museum of archaeology, arts and anthropology into handsome, convenient and efficient form, whether in the galleries open to the public or in the storage and work areas behind the scenes, has gone on almost without interruption. The fact that the second unit of the building, on which construction was about to start in October, 1962, had to be postponed because of the emergency, and still is indefinitely in the future, has made very precise planning a necessity in order to accommodate well and safely the Museum's continuously growing collections. The exhibition areas have been assigned:

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the panorama of India's culture and history, as recorded in its arts, unrolls as the visitor passes from hall to hall, and from floor to floor. The finest examples from all periods and from all parts of the country that the Museum has been able to assemble, tell the story clearly in an attractive fashion, despite the instructive aim.

The Idea of a National Museum

After five years, has the National Museum fulfilled its promise, achieved its purpose, satisfied the high expectations with which it was founded in 1949 ? Let the circumstances of its origin be recalled. Independence had been achieved. New Delhi the growing capital in this ancient land was taking on a new character as the seat of government of the young nation. A great exhibition of Indian art had been held in London in 1947-48 and now had returned to New Delhi where it was on exhibition in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, before being returned to its owners, the museums and private lenders scattered throughout the country. So comprehensive a review of the ancient art of India as a whole had never previously been presented to the Indian public. Museums with fine collections had long existed in India's principal cities, but their collections included very little beyond the archaeology and art of their own regions. Here, for the first time, was a survey, in objects of the highest quality and significance, of the entire range of India's archaeology and arts, selected to represent all parts of the country, all periods, all styles and all media. The proposal for a National Museum in the capital at once took roots. It is doubtful whether any of the nation's leaders who supported the project at that time foresaw more than dimly its possibilities, but they had faith in the future and appreciated what it would mean to have all of India so nobly represented in New Delhi. The corner stone of the first unit of the new building was accordingly laid in 1955, and the finished structure was transferred to the Museum's staff in June, 1960. Meanwhile, during the ten years' interval, the National Museum held its exhibition in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, under conditions far from perfect, because of the improvised installations, but with the ideal of a national museum always firmly held. Continuous search for fine examples of Indian arts was carried on and purchases of individual items and large collections were made each year. Likewise the beginnings of an educational programme, with guide lecturers to help school parties on their frequent visits and to instruct the general public, contributing to making visitors understand more thoroughly what was exhibited, had been provided. In short, the basic requirements of a modern museum, serving the community and the nation, had been established under the able guidance of Shri C. Sivaramamurti, who was the officer in charge from 1955. Part of the strength of the new form of the National Museum in its own quarters has been that this able leadership has not been interrupted, nor any of the hard-won gains, made under difficult conditions of the past, been lost. On the contrary, what the National Museum was able to accomplish from 1955, when it may be recognized as aiming at a thoroughly professional course, has served as a firm foundation for its growth in its new setting since 1960.

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National Museum on Modern Lines

In the new building, the conditions for a museum functioning in the fully accepted contemporary international "Museological" pattern of an instrument for education and cultural development for all, from general public to formal education at every level, are favourable. Already this is confirmed by an increasing annual attendance of well over two lakh a year. Though at present there is only the first unit of the National Museum's building, this structure provides two extremely valuable facilities for an active museum: an excellent small auditorium for lectures, motion picture showings and cultural programmes, and ample especially designed space for the rapidly growing art Library. They are both intensively used. The exhibition space is good and lends itself to the logical and effective organization of the material to be shown. In some parts of the Museum, the ground floor devoted to pre-history, proto-history and historic archaeology, for example, this organization is chronological, a pattern that is most useful for the student or for the casual visitor, Indian or foreign, who is seeking to grasp the evolution of Indian culture and history, as expressed in archaeology and the arts. On other floors, where the miniatures, manuscripts, decorative arts of wide variety, cultural anthropology of costumes and articles of daily use, are products of a more recent past, and the materials differ widely in kind, the presentation is by sections, each devoted to a specific type of material.

Experiments in the New Methods

As a new institution among India's many older museums, five important ones having been founded more than a century ago, the National Museum, New Delhi, has great opportunities and major obligations. Its opportunities include the new building, where installation of the exhibition galleries could be planned carefully in accordance with contemporary international museum practice. The exhibition after all, is the means through which a museum conveys information, on direct visual contact with the objects, by the way in which they are arranged. An attractive installation, in colour backgrounds and in orderly, spacious arrangement, engages the interest and attention of the visitor; the object, and the relation of object to object, discreet but ample labelling, charts, maps and diagrams when required, teach him—to his enjoyment as well as benefit. The National Museum could make discriminating selection of the pieces to be shown; it could give each one sufficient space to permit it to have its full aesthetic effect, as well as to convey its meaning from every point of view. To supplement the exhibited pieces it could provide introductory sections of general labels and other explanatory material, providing historical and technical information, for the various periods or types of objects on view. It already had examples of archaeology and art of outstanding quality in every category. Its aim was not only to present each kind of material, handsomely and well, but also to bring out its full value and importance as a "document" on Indian culture and history, as well as art. As a relatively new museum in a new building it could approach problems of presentation or display without hindrance,

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designing cases, pedestals and other gallery furniture to suit its requirements; it could experiment and try out new methods.

Role of the National Museum

As a National Museum, its obligations are many. They increase in quantity and variety as the Museum developed. Some of them, described briefly, may help to define the character and role of this National Museum. Some of them were undoubtedly in the minds of those who were responsible for founding it. In many ways, the National Museum serves as a stimulus and an example to other museums, whether new ones being planned, or older ones which, everywhere in the country, are being renovated and reformed in the direction of contemporary professional "museological" thinking, which regards museums as instruments of public education. The National Museum's exhibitions set a standard. For the museums of the country which wish to have specifications on cases and other gallery furniture, and wish to send staff members to study techniques, the National Museum is happy to share all its experience. For many museums the exhibitions and their methods are simply references and examples which they strive to emulate and then to excel, in their own ways. Happily a good number of museums elsewhere in the country have succeeded well, for example the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, in its recent installations, and the Government Museum, Madras, in its new buildings and in the new exhibitions in the original buildings.

Experiments shared with Others

Because of the National Museum's stringent limitations of space, in the building, confined at present to only its first unit, as well as to the influence of climate in a building designed for complete air-conditioning, but still without it, planning for safe but convenient storage has received very great care. Solutions found, and equipment, designed for its needs, and judged successful, are freely shared with other museums as a basis for their adaptations to their own requirements. Similarly not only the designs for gallery furniture, but the procedures devised for registration for the safe recording of collections, the index systems to assure convenience for reference, the technical methods of every kind are all made readily available to colleagues. In other words, in these and in many other ways the National Museum carries on experiments in meeting its requirements and then sharing on request the successful results with other museums.

As a Training Centre

The National Museum serves as a museums' training centre also. In the first place it carries on in-service training of its own junior professional and technical personnel in the theory and practice of "museology" in the broadest sense. It endeavours to establish among all its staff, a museum philosophy and ethics, so that they may provide leadership to the profession in these "museological" aspects. It encourages them in their scholarly work. It admits for short periods of intensive training under guidance of its own

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senior staff members, personnel deputed from other museums of the country to its in-service training sessions and to a programme of supervised reading, observation and study of its methods. Its Conservation Laboratory especially carries on a continuous instruction programme for the benefit of museums in India, by accepting personnel for basic training and by carrying the principles of conservation and care of museum objects to the profession at large in professional meetings, like those of the Museums Association of India, and of the Museum Camps organised by the Ministry of Education.

Conservation and Preservation

The Conservation Laboratory indeed represents a major service of the National Museum to the profession in India as well as to the demanding cause of preservation of the nation's heritage in archaeology and arts. It not only cares for the National Museum's own extremely valuable collections, but it undertakes emergency conservation for other Indian museums up to the limit of its staff and equipment. It gives on request, guidance, advice and assistance to other museum laboratories. It may therefore be stated that the National Museum recognizes that it has obligations to serve, not only to the nation, as a great museum representing the whole of India, and a focus of education for its own community of Delhi, but also as a place of experiment and trial for "museological" matters of every kind for the benefit of its colleagues throughout the country. In short it feels that its own progress and improvement go side by side with the general development of museums in the country.

A big Museum in Evolution

After five years, the National Museum is still developing; it remains very emphatically a "museum in evolution." It expects to remain so, for it realizes that a museum can never be finished, never static. To illustrate in simple housekeeping terms: dust penetrates the best of cases, light fixtures wear out and fail, fastenings for objects sag, new information continually is added to archaeological and art history and must be reflected in labels, paint and polish must be renewed, so that continuous vigilance and correction are required in every part of the museum open to the public, in order to maintain standards. Behind the scenes, in relation to collections stored, the same unremitting attention and hard physical work is required to keep collections well, to add to the knowledge about them, and to make them effectively serve scholarship. In a very real sense therefore, museum work is never done and after five years in its new location, the National Museum recognizes that its own work, if well begun, lies still very much ahead of it.

So much for museum services and "servicing". In general, museum professional standing depends on its collections and on its staff. For staff, the National Museum has among its senior members distinguished scholars and museologists. Its younger staff includes young men and women well qualified educationally, of outstanding gifts, energy and diligence, gaining the particular

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experience museum work requires, and developing according to their scholarly aptitudes. The National Museum is by no means as yet fully staffed for its requirements, but modest contributions to scholarship are already being made, from study of its collections. Their safe keeping and care their "servicing" in short, are receiving full attention. Thus the basic responsibilities of a museum are not neglected, though, for lack of adequate staff they are carried on more slowly than would be ideal.

A Fine Representative Collection

For collections, a visit to the exhibition galleries illustrates their scope. They range from pre-history, approximately half a million years ago, through historic archaeology and the arts of more recent centuries, in the form of sculptures, paintings, manuscripts, the decorative arts in every form, coins, arms, anthropology. The quality is high throughout. However a few collections should be noted particularly: the Harappan or Indus Valley material, principally from the well known major sites first excavated, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (c. 2500 B. C., and representing a culture that extended far south into present-day India); the Central Asian Antiquities (from about the second century A.D. to the twelfth century) collected by Sir Aurel Stein along the silk routes, north of India, between China and the Mediterranean, the Verrier Elwin Collection of Tribal Arts. Other collections are not units, which will remain unchanged, as these are. Many are very large, they come from many sources, and are the result of careful purchase over the years. Only a changing selection from them can be shown at any one time. This is true of miniature paintings, manuscripts, textiles, coins and arms. They continue growing year by year, as rare pieces are added. In collecting, the National Museum's aim is to assemble, for the benefit of the nation, as fine and complete a representation of India's archaeology, arts and anthropological specimens as possible. It has already been able to accomplish a great deal in this direction; the results are in its exhibition galleries where all may learn from them as well as enjoy them, or in its carefully organized reserve collections which are at the service of scholars and research workers.

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THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART

Prodosh Dasgupta

The establishment of the National Gallery of Modern Art in 1954 was in itself a recognition of the artistic urges and emotional and instinctive aspirations of a free people wanting to express and expand. Representing a gradual evolution and growth of the various art trends in the country during a brief span of a century, the National Gallery, through a process of annual art purchase, by means of a duly constituted Art Purchase Committee, meeting three to four times a year at the important centres in the country has at present a rich and a representative art collection of about two thousand art objects mainly paintings, sculptures and graphics representing more than three hundred artists covering a wide variety of styles which include amongst others names like Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy, Nandlal Bose, Raja Ravi Varma and Amrita Sher Gil. To this has been added a small Western Section where a beginning has been made with the works of Sir Alma Tadema (P.R.A.), Jacob Epstein, Alta Mirano, Paja Jovanic, Boris Georgieve, Peter Lubarda and Mc. M. Greene. It has an excellent Art Reference Library with about two thousand books catering both to the general reader and research scholar alike.

The Gallery still in a developmental stage, has brought out two excellent publications *viz.* Guide to the Gallery and a set of picture postcards and has an extensive programme of publication of monographs of important artists, a catalogue of its art collections and greeting cards. In the next Five Year Plan, the Gallery intends to have the entire house air-conditioned, acquire an independent electric generator, enlarge its areas of activities by holding and inviting important exhibitions significant in the context of modern trends of world art to-day.

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Renaissance in Indian Art

The need for a National Gallery of Modern Art was first felt in the Art conference held in Calcutta in 1949 where the first serious recommendation was made. As a result, the National Gallery of Modern Art was inaugurated on March 29, 1954 at Jaipur House, New Delhi The Gallery represents the history of Modern Art from the time when the once all powerful Rajasthani School of painting was already on the decline and a new art form was emerging with the introduction of oils under the leadership of Raja Ravi Varma. Historically, this sets in about 1857 which is a very rough though arbitrary line of demarcation between what is modern and what is not. In the early years of the 20th century a movement started in Bengal under the guidance of E. B. Havell and Abanindra Nath Tagore which aimed at reviving some of the ancient ideals of Ajanta and Ellora as well as what was best in the Mughal, the Rajput and the Kangra Schools. More important historically than in performance the Bengali renaissance produced a rare galaxy of names like Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Nand Lal Bose, Kshitindranath Mazumdar, Asit Haldar, Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Venkatappa all of which find honourable places in the National Gallery of Modern Art.

In starting the revival movement in art Abanindranath Tagore was supported by a batch of young enthusiastic artists who religiously followed the master in evolving and developing a technique commonly called the Wash Method of painting which is achieved by alternating a wash with the painting of colour generally mixed with white and thus tranquillising the various layers of the colours thereby creating a strange mystic effect, which is the key-note of this technique.

Bengal School

During the thirties, a new upsurge in art was witnessed in Bengal which arose out of the remains of the old revival movement. This was not a group tendency or a collective effort but was deeply individualised in the works of such stalwarts as Rabindra Nath Tagore, Gaganendra Nath Tagore and Jamini Roy. With these masters may be easily added another great name, Amrita Sher Gil, born in Budapest in 1932 of a Hungarian mother and an Indian father. These are great names but they remained rare individual voices. Nothing of this new trend emerged in the shape of a movement in our country till a group of young artists in Calcutta took up the cause of new western styles in art seriously and formed themselves into a movement in 1943 to be called the Calcutta group.

Bombay, Delhi and Madras

Historically this period coincided with the time when Bengal was under the throes of a devastating famine. It was therefore psychologically tenable that the rebels broke new grounds in the field of art and made absolutely fresh artistic advances in those tragic days. The voices of this rebellion were soon echoed in every nook and corner of the country and in 1948 immediately after the country's independence, the Bombay Progressive Group took up the cue, to be very soon followed by well organised team activity in Madras, Kashmir,

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Delhi and Baroda. The Bombay group is richly represented in the Gallery by the works of M. F. Hussain. F. N. Souza, Akbar Padamsee and Baburao Satwalkar to mention only a few. The Delhi movement can be witnessed on the walls of the Gallery through Satish Gujral, Avinash Chandra, Somnath Hore, Krishna Reddy and Krishan Khanna. Similarly Madras group is adequately covered by the works of K. C. S. Panikar, Srinivasulu and Santhana Raj. Of the Calcutta group, among others, the Gallery possesses the works of Rathin Moitra, Paritosh Sen and Nirod Mazumdar. In the recent years a new school has emerged from Baroda whose representatives like G. R. Santosh, Shanti Dave, and J. M. Parikh find places in the collection of the Gallery. The triumphs of modern sculpture have also been richly represented in the Gallery in the works of artists like D. P. Roy Choudhury, Prodosh Dasgupta, Sankho Chowdhury, Amarnath Sehgal, Ram Kinkar, Pillo Pochkhanawala and A. M. Davierwala. The Gallery also possesses about half a dozen canvases of Thomas Daniel whose work is of sufficient historical value today.

The contemporary artists of the younger generation who also rub shoulders with the masters in the Gallery freely draw from all sources to their advantage without much restraint or even inhibitions. This is natural in a world of nuclear advances and supersonic planes.

There are various sections and sub-sections in the Gallery and each one of them whether it is painting, sculpture, graphic art, tapestry, textiles or minor arts, has been arranged systematically, scientifically and chronologically, distinguishing the essential from the inessential, emphasising the whole at the same time not losing sight of the detail, making it abundantly possible even for an average visitor to follow the evolution of art forms so as to enable him to derive the maximum aesthetic enjoyment he is capable of. The display arrangement has been divided into two parts—one relating to the exhibits in the first floor starting with the Company period and ending in Bengal School. The other relates to the contemporary works which are on view in the ground floor.

Special Rooms for Masters

Special rooms are allotted to the works of the masters like Rabindra Nath Tagore, Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Abanindra Nath Tagore, Jamini Roy, Nand Lal Bose, and Amrita Sher Gil. The Tagore room is a class by itself. Self-schooled and self-scanned the poet's scribblings in ink and wash are a natural extension of his poetic ecstacies which were so private and yet so universal. . Rightly called the father of Modern Indian Art, Tagore's paintings are poetic fancies, his view of life, his interpretation of Man and the Cries of his soul. Even at 69 when painting came to him it came so naturally and so spontaneously. In all we have a collection of 100 paintings of Tagore. Of great aesthetic merit among his works are "Brooding", "For in the Wood", "Woman's Face", "Six Figures", "Head Study", "Two Faces" and "Veiled Woman".

In Abanindra Nath Tagore's room artistic creations like "Portrait of Sri Rathindra Nath Tagore", "My grandson Asit Tagore", "Morning", "Her Grand Daughter's Toys", "Nurjehan", "Huen-Tsang" and his studies

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of birds greet the eye. Rightly designated as father of the Indian renaissance, he was mainly responsible for initiating and revitalising the spirit of Indian Art. Nand Lal Bose who is a direct disciple of Abanindra Nath Tagore is also honoured with a separate room where the collection includes paintings like "Head of Shiva", "Radha's Viraha", "Arjuna", "Woman carrying Flowers". The landscapes by Gaganendra Nath Tagore are works of great artistic merit combining an exceptional coalition of the Chinese sense of space and Japanese wash technique. A few examples of his later development in enlist style are also shown.

On the ground floor there is yet another room, where the works of Amrita Sher Gil are displayed. Having been trained in Paris under the influence of the post-impressionist masters like Gauguin and Cezanne she came to India to discover her own heritage. Thus her study and her inheritance resulted into an excellent synthesis of the two extreme worlds of technique in India and in France. The Gallery possesses ninety-seven paintings of Sher Gil which is by far the largest single collection in the country. Amongst others the "Women at Bath", "Camels", "Bride", "Elephant Promenade", and "Village Girl" are works of great aesthetic merit. The collection also includes studies in self-portraiture and nudes which are of sufficient historical value, particularly in the formation of an evolution of an individual style for which she was to be known later.

Extension Services

Within the Gallery there is a lecture hall where lectures on art and allied matters are arranged and film shows are conducted for the public periodically. There is a plan to have a separate gallery for the sculptures on the back lawns of the House whose natural architectural setting will synchronize so richly with the end in view but since the present building does not wholly belong to us, many a scheme of development are held up. In fact, there is also a plan to set up studios for the artists but it, too, has not made any headway. Sculpture is a neglected art in our country and needs very urgent attention. During the last few years, therefore, the Gallery has been trying to acquire more and more pieces of sculpture so as to make the collection rich, representative as well as worthy of a National Institution.

One very important aspect of any art gallery is the preservation and restoration of paintings and other art objects. A work of art is like a human body which should be immediately treated whenever it shows any sign of deterioration. Even to preserve it from natural calamities is a highly specialized job. There is, thus, a Restoration Laboratory which functions under the care and guidance of a fully trained Restorer. The paintings of Amrita Sher Gil, for example, require constant attention, regular repairs and watch and periodical examination.

Publications Programme

The Gallery had a very ambitious publication programme but due to so many difficulties at so many stages not all has been successfully achieved. We have on our schedule the following scheme of the immediate publications which are likely to come out shortly :—

(i) Monograph on Amrita Sher Gil.

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(ii) Monograph on R. N. Tagore.

(iii) A set of twelve picture postcards on Rabindra Nath Tagore.

(iv) Reprint of the Guide to the Gallery.

(v) A set of 12 Greeting Cards.

(vi) Catalogue.

(vii) Monograph on Abanindra Nath Tagore.

In fact we wish to bring out monographs on almost all the important artists and also plan out a regular art bulletin which should be in the nature of a forum for museum education and art instructions. Finances, it is said, are the fuel of administration. With sound finances, museum administration which is already a highly specialized science will attract brighter youngmen. With the introduction of All India museum service, Galleries can become real places of beauty which will gladden many a heart. On a long term basis we have also a plan to publish a portfolio of modern paintings, as well as a portfolio of modern sculptures but all these are plans which will mature with the appointment of a whole time Publication Officer. With the expansion of the Gallery, the library and the guiding services will also increase. Even at present our Art Reference Library which contains some very rare and costly books offers very generous facilities to any inquiring mind, for research, investigation or enjoyment.

A Centre of World Art Activity

In a growing museum many problems such as of security, copyright, and art education to public and many other matters connected with museology are bound to arise which can be offset by periodical training of the museum personnel in the latest advances made in the respective areas of such activity. This type of training on the art side is also being explored and in one or two cases our effort has been rewarded with success, This is highly necessary for any museum to rescue itself from the usual danger of being syndicated, in other words stagnation. So central is this type of training to growth that without this it is impossible to keep pace with the Western galleries.

The National Gallery of Modern Art, therefore, is not content with its being merely a nucleus of modern art collection but also aspires to be a centre of international art activity. There is hardly any gallery of its kind in the whole of the East. It therefore aims at international understanding through Art. It is, thus, not a local or merely a National Gallery but a part of the World Art Movement, offering aesthetic pleasures to those who seek it, opening new vistas of beauty of those from whom it is so far hidden, enlarging the artistic vision of those who are engaged in any creative effort.

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CRAFTS MUSEUM

Ajit Mookerjee

India is passing through a cultural renaissance and though its progress may still appear insufficient *vis-a-vis* the needs of the country and the standards of our time, it has already assumed a breath-taking speed when measured against the economic, technical and human resources available. That this revolution has affected the museums in India also needs no special explanation. True, the majority of visitors still consists of curious crowds enjoying the wonder house, but an intelligent and appreciative public is developing which really wants to learn from the collection and these have become sufficiently complete to be capable of conveying a coherent story and a valuable message. A new task has been set in the leading museum in the country that of providing a general civic education. They have, that is to say, to give the intelligent visitor a picture of his region, his country, or even of Asia and, indeed, the whole world, in a balanced display of well explained exhibits with all their essential visual aspects of arts and crafts heritage of the past and the present. And they must build up all the facilities for rendering this documentation intelligible and interesting.

Aware of their importance India today is planning to develop museums of various kinds. In this growing pattern, the Crafts Museum, which is the only National Crafts Museum in India, is destined to play a very important role. By assembling, preserving and displaying craft objects, this institution will rightly justify India's unique position in the field of handicrafts—a cultural heritage coming down for millennia. The All India Handicrafts Board, Government of India, since its inception in 1952, undertook to collect and preserve as many of these valuable objects as possible for purposes of study, research and reproduction. Although these outstanding exhibits provided an inspiration for developing a Crafts Museum, it was not until the year 1956-57 that a suitable display of the material could be arranged in New Delhi and the Crafts Museum for the first time brought to the notice of the public.

Temporary House

This was, however, only a temporary arrangement and these unique collections are now kept in Thapar House, New Delhi, pending the construction of a new building of its own. Inasmuch as the purpose of the Crafts Museum is to contribute, through the use of exhibits, to the cultural and intellectual life of the community, and to heighten the appreciation of the works of our craftsmen, whose traditional techniques and forms are fast disappearing, it is absolutely necessary that there should be a permanent habitat for these growing collections. Accordingly, a planning scheme for a permanent building has been drawn up.

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Future Plans

The proposed new building of the Crafts Museum will have twelve main components including display rooms and open-air arrangements; an auditorium to seat 600; with stage and dressing rooms; lecture; demonstration and class-rooms; library and reading rooms; special exhibition hall; juvenile section; lobby, reception, sales counter; storage, laboratory and workshops, etc. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the philosophy which motivates exhibit policies in modern museums is that of creating a hospitable, relaxing environment in which the visitor is encouraged to identify himself with the exhibits.

A collection is necessary to form a museum, but all that is a collection is not a museum. The Crafts Museum galleries will not be stuffed with merely the rich and the rare. The guiding principle in the matter of selection has always been the inclusion of those specimens which can be reproduced again, if necessary, with modification and reorientation. So the reproduction-of-the-specimens programme of the Museum is all important in relation to the collection.

A museum like the Crafts Museum aims at presenting to a large section of our people striking vestiges of our traditional culture. It will link the popular arts and crafts of today with the old traditions, and these significant products will not merely be objects of scientific research; they will play an important part in the social, educational and the cultural developments of our country.

Rich and Variegated Acquisitions

The collection in the Crafts Museum has been enriched by acquisitions of dolls and toys, paintings and textile, stone and ivory, wood and metal objects, terracotta and jewellery from various parts of India. The extensive collection of textiles is a speciality of the Museum. The bold colour, decorative designs and motives reveal the craftsman's depth of imagination and the clever way of rendering simple and variegated forms in woven material. A prize collection is a rare specimen of a very large size Kalamkari print. Besides, there are Baluchar saris, Masulipatam batiks, Banaras brocades, Gujarat patolas, Tanjore silk, Punjab phulkaris, Kashmir shawls and decorative kanthas from Bengal. In addition to these, there is a wide variety of specimens of costume designs, excellent embroidered works, choli pieces and ghagras.

India is rich in jewellery but her traditional designs are probably best preserved in the folk type. The Crafts Museum has also made a special effort to collect as many specimens as possible so that modern designers and craftsmen may choose from the myriads of Indian forms—now threatened with gradual extinction.

The museums movement is one of the constructive forces in our changing social structure. Aware of their importance, India today is planning to develop museums of various kinds. In this growing pattern, the Crafts Museum is destined to play a very important role. By assembling, preserving, displaying and demonstration craft objects this institution will rightly justify India's unique position in the field of handicrafts—a cultural heritage coming down for millennia.

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NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Prabha Sahasrabudhe

Educational Function of the Museum

A magazine issue dedicated to survey current trends in museology would obviously not be complete without some mention of children's museum. Education through museums is an objective currently in focus. How to fulfil the educational function, how to plan effective programmes for people's education, how best to use the museum resources for the development and growth of the community, are questions foremost in the minds of the

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museologist today. And it is this concern for education that has in a large way contributed to the growth of the idea, and the institution called a Children's Museum.

As an Educational Instrument

Education has of course very rightly become the centre of attention for the museologist. Recognition of a museum as an educational instrument is very timely indeed. To those in the West, this recognition provides an excellent opportunity to serve the people that indirectly support the museum. In Europe and in America, it might be said, that museums turned to education because the "common man" began demanding attention from the museum. He, as a new patron, having voice in city councils, borough assemblies and state legislature, claimed his share in the art heritage of the nation. He became the public opinion, asking for better schools for his children, better recreation, better formal and informal education. On the other hand, in the developing countries of the East the education potential of a museum is a new weapon, a new tool to be exploited for the all-round growth and understanding of the people. The museum provides a quick, effective and economical way of building up a community with interest in, sensitivity for understanding a nation, its background, resources, history, politics and arts.

Is Museum a Luxury?

There is a variety of people a museum must serve, the scholar and the interested student is easy to tackle with, all he needs is well catalogued, easily accessible object material, and guidance for scholarship. It is the non-student, the office worker, the factory worker, the taxi driver, and the rest, often grouped as together as the general public that need special attention. In this group there are literates and illiterates. It is this group for which we must carefully plan.

Introductory Lobby

The size of our large museums becomes so overwhelming that in his effort to see through all the museum the visitor is completely baffled, and ends up with a number of unrelated impressions which are short-lived. In my opinion, it is necessary for each large museum to have introductory exhibits lobby, which would provide a fifteen minute survey of everything that is in the museum. On the basis of this the visitor should be able to choose what he wants to see within the time that he has at his disposal.

It would also be useful if the visitor could be helped with prepared plans, such as study of sculpture in the museum in 10-one-hour-visits, or looking at Rajput Miniatures in 3-visits. In short it will be necessary to spoon-feed the visitor, to plan his visit or visits methodically so that he is able to take something back when he goes home, and is motivated to return for a second dose. Visitors cannot be taken for granted. Elementary understanding must be provided and should not be assumed, when preparing exhibits.

All this assumes that museum will shoulder a major responsibility for cultural education of the public. This is possible if and when all other agencies of the community accept the museum in this role.

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There is a definite need in this country for making people aware of the human need for culture, of making it possible for people to experience and to participate in cultural activity of the Nation. A museum is the kind of an institution that can fill this role if the community would demand this out of a museum; if the city administration would realize this museum potential; if museum would be accepted as an important institution for public education and given status equal to that of the university and the public library.

The Need for Children's Museums

Besides the scholar and general public another important section of population that a museum concerned with education, has to think of is children. In work with children the museum educator would find immediate rewards, and experience gains that would be an investment in the future of the community.

The average Indian adult today, as suggested earlier, needs to be spoon-fed, he has to be brought into the museum and given experiences that will be, for him, immediately profitable and satisfying. But the quality of mind of a nation cannot be enriched by this process. We not only want the large mass of our people to participate in culture, we also want them to be responsible for creating culture. Our next generation of adults must be prepared to demand their cultural feed. That is why the museum's work with children becomes extremely important.

Educator's Role

Broadly speaking the whole world is a museum for children. The world around can become a museum for children under the expert and sensitive guidance of an educator, who knows how to interest children in the world of objects, of art, of nature, of animals, of sience and technology. However it is this educator who is the essential factor, it is he who is aware of the special needs and limitation of children, it is he who knows what special approach to adopt for introducing children to various aspects of this world, it is this realization, the discovery that children have to be helped, guided, inspired to step into the world they live in, that has led to the establishment of children's museums and children's departments attached to museums.

Educating the Children

Primarily, a children's museum provides children with objects: animate, and inanimate, live and preserved specimens, three-dimentional materials, etc., to bring to life, as it were their classroom and out-of-classroom experiences. Besides this a museum must also help awaken in children a thirst for understanding, an interest in life and living, and a passion for getting involved in something that they have discovered.

This is a tall order. And obviously a single isolated children's museum will not be able to fulfil this role. unless the museum becomes a central agency, an integral part of an educational system, using resources of the entire city, planning, and ordinating live-experience activity for all children. My recent visit to the United States and some twenty children's museums and children's institutions convinces me that if a children's museum is really to

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begin doing a job as I conceive it, then this museum will have to be a large complex of institution and galleries, staffed with top-notch talent, and sensitive, well informed educators.

Scope of a Children's Museum

That is to say a children's museum cannot confine itself to a building, and galleries with permanently fixed exhibits and dioramas. A children's museum needs to provide object-complement, the exhibit to make real what children learn about. Obviously it will be important for a museum to provide exhibit-material for all classes from I to XII and all the various subjects taught in school. And all this material even if available cannot be put on permanent exhibit.

The worth of the object collected or prepared for children's museum cannot be considered in terms of its rarity, in terms of its value to the expert and the antiquarian; but only in terms of meaning that the object has for children. Exhibition is an important museum technique, important for children as well. But a children's museum must concentrate on several small, readily portable exhibits that can go into classroom. Major installations have their place but then these must underline major concepts and understanding that cuts across the boundaries of subjects, and class levels.

Often, it is necessary, when preparing exhibition for children, to employ extraneous means of attracting children, *e.g.*, the scale and size of things, colour schemes of display, even mechanical devices. But we have to be cautious to see that push button approach is not overdone. Recently I had a shocking experience of this. I saw children going through an exhibition, where it would seem that push buttons, pull cords, cranks and pulleys, had been put in, in every conceivable place. As a result, in the museum where already there was much, to see, these gadgets merely became a source of unchecked excitement. Children went around pushing and pulling buttons without caring to find out what happened when they pushed or pulled. We need to promote intensified experience, as such we must plan exhibits where children come to see, to perceive and to think. Too many things in an exhibition may prove to be something that encourages flitting over from one thing to another, and not letting children concentrate, or deeply experience one theme, one idea, one concept.

Participation Opportunities

One of the most significant ways of doing this, of fostering deep-seated interest in children is providing participation opportunities for them. Museums all over, use various means for this such as, gallery games, quiz sheets, fill-up the answer, etc., to get children involved in discovering and looking.

But the most important fact of children programmes in a museum is organised activity. Activities in arts, science, music, social studies geared to promoting children's interest, cultivating their imagination, supporting their own interests and ideas. These museum based activity programmes for children are to my mind so important that I consider a children's museum more of an activity centre than an exhibition oriented gallery. The National

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Children's Museum, in Delhi is so oriented.

The existing building of the National Children's Museum was completed in 1963. The Museum has so far organized four major exhibitions *viz.* Book Fair, Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, Our Nervous System and Central Science Fair. During recent years following seminars were also conducted: Children's Museums, Writing for Children, Art Teachers' Workshops, Three Art, Conference, Science Club Organizer's Workshops and Creative Drama Workshop. The Museum has produced a number of brochures, reports and other publications

There are over three lakh school going children in Delhi and over 500 schools of all types. Implication of this is very clear. If all the children are to be benefited by a visit to the museum at least once a year the museum must accommodate over a 1000 children per day. This calls for a big plant. However, we should be satisfied with one visit per child per year, even if we have a large museum.

Taking Museum to the Children

The only answer is, as I have been suggesting all through, taking the museum to children. A children's museum then, must become an agency to marshall object-resources of the community and make them available to children, in the school and outside the school. This can be done through (i) preparing small portable exhibitions on specific themes, for classroom use, (ii) preparing illustrative materials, booklets on the visual resources of the city, booklets that will help the teacher plan his guided field trips, and teaching his lessons, more effectively, (iii) boxed unit materials, pictures, photographs, reproductions, live specimens, models, etc. on a wide range of topics to cover the entire school curriculum, (iv) shelved materials from all over the world, and (v) major installations involving fundamental conceptual understandings.

This kind of approach makes a children's museum, not an isolated institution but a dynamic centre devoted to procuring and supplying all sorts of objects-complements to school education from all possible sources.

Along with this, a children's centre in developing countries must also be actively involved in problems of education, in promoting creative approach to teaching. This makes it necessary that this kind of institution be equally involved in work with the teachers, school authorities and parents. This is what the National Children's Meseum is attempting to do.

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

R. Vanaja

One of the earliest Site Museums to be set up in India, the Archaeological Museum, Red Fort, Delhi, has a unique and interesting collection, of antiquities of various categories mainly of the Mughal period. The Museum is housed in the Mumtaz Mahal, one of the historical monuments of the Red Fort. Originally the apartment of the Mughal Princesses, this monument for more than fifty years now, has served as an abode for some of the finest Mughal antiquities, displayed in its two halls. In fact this Museum is the only Site Museum in India, to possess a rich collection of Mughal antiquities.

The Historical Background

The history of such a Museum as this should prove very interesting indeed. The preface to the 1909 edition of the Catalogue of this Museum, compiled by Dr. J. Ph. Vogel narrates in detail, its historical background. Dr. Vogel refers in his preface to a Municipal Museum, which existed for forty years at the Town Hall, Delhi. This Municipal Museum, it is said, was founded in the year 1868 by one Mr. F. H. Cooper, who was then the Deputy Commissioner of the district. The local authorities seemed to have paid considerable attention to the Museum judging by the valuable donations the Museum had received during these forty years. The collections had gradually increased, but since the scope of the Museum was not clearly defined, the collection had become a mass of heterogenous articles with sections as numerous as unrepresentative. "Side by side with Graeco-Buddhist sculptures were gaudy idols of modern Jaipur manufacture and stuffed animals of puzzling appearance." This anamolous state of affairs could not continue for long. The scope of the collection and in fact the scope of the Museum itself had to be defined or alternate steps taken to wind it up.

The Birth of the Delhi Museum of Archaeology

It was left to Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy, to set matters right. Lord Curzon referred the matter to the Archaeological Department and proposals were submitted by them. One of these relating to removing the useless exhibits from this Municipal Museum and the other to establishing a historical Museum in the Naubat or Naqqar Khana, one of the monuments in the historic Red Fort, which was to contain objects of interest connected with the Red Fort, Delhi. The latter proposal was repeated in a more definite form in 1902 when John

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Marshall had become the head of the Archaeological Department, but it was not carried into effect until 1907. The old Municipal Museum was wound up that year, when most of the exhibits, including a collection of Graeco Buddhist sculptures were made over to the Lahore Museum, a few sculptural fragments were sent to Lucknow and Jain sculptures to the Mathura Museum. The New Delhi, Museum of Archaeology, came into being, in 1909 and in the beginning it was housed in the Naubat or Naqqar Khana of the Red Fort, with part of the collection of the old Museum, which was considerably augmented as time went on. The Museum was subsequently shifted to another historic monument in the Red Fort area, the Mumtaz Mahal some time in 1911-12.

The Mumtaz Mahal in which the Archaeological Museum, is housed still, was formerly one of the apartments of the Mughal Princesses, but after the British occupation of the Red Fort in 1857 it was put to military uses serving as the Sargeants Mess. The improvements carried out to the Archaeological area of the Red Fort in 1902 but not completed until 1911, included the conservation of the building, and its adaptation into the Delhi Museum of Archaeology. Many casts of whitewash had marred the beauty of this building and on scraping the walls traces of beautiful decoration and paintings were revealed. It was here in this monument that the coronation Darbar loan exhibition was held when choice exhibits from the Delhi Museum of Archaeology along with many other exhibits were on display.

A Rich Collection of the Mughal Period

The nucleus of the collection in this Museum was based on the material of the old Municipal Museum, which was dissolved in 1907. The collection has been considerably augmented, with exhibits through purchase, gifts and treasure trove finds. The antiquities in the collection at present total more than 11,000 coins and a thousand other antiquities like inscriptions, farmans and sanads, arms and armour, paintings etc. The collection proper, one can see, is of various categories, but at the same time homogeneous in character, illustrating as they do one of the glorious epochs of Indian history. Excavated material and inscriptions and stone objects in the Museum were found in the clearances of the Qutub, the old Fort or Purana Qila, and other monuments in and around Delhi, few pieces of copper and earthenware from Qila Rai Pithora, and some costumes of the late Mughals and other miscellaneous articles of ivory and jade some of them found in the Fort itself after its capture by the British during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. These are all of special interest not only to a student of history by reason of their historic associations but to any connossieur of art as well for their aesthetic and artistic value and craftsmanship. No less valuable, are the royal charters, the farmans and sanads, the hand-written manuscripts, some of them illustrated, and beautiful specimens of penmanship *i.e.* calligraphy, affording ample material for study of Mughal administration, and the socio-economic, religious conditions of that period.

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Coins from Babar to Bahadur Shah II

By far the biggest and the richest collection of antiquities, the coins numbering over 11,000 represent the issues of the Delhi Sultans and the Mughal rulers and the entire numismatic history of over six hundred years *i.e.* 1200-1857 A.D., could be reconstructed with the aid of coins in our cabinet. The coins of almost all the Delhi Sultans, the Slave rulers, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids, Lodis and the Surs and all the Mughal Emperors starting from Babar up to the issues of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II (1837-1857) are available in the coins collection cabinet but there is ample scope for improvement as certain issues of early Mughal rulers and certain types such as the famous Zodiacal mohar's and rupees of Jehangir are not well-represented here.

The other categories of the antiquities in the Museum not only supplement the information provided by the coins in the cabinet, but add up to our knowledge of the socio-economic, political conditions during the three hundred years of Mughal rule in India. Under this class can be grouped the inscriptions, either on stone or metal, arms and armour, seals, Royal charters live farmans and sanads, calligraphy specimens, manuscripts, paintings, portraits etc. jade, ivory and other decorative art objects and costumes in the collection.

Sandstone and Marble Inscriptions

The inscriptions in red sandstone and marble numbering about twenty, belong to the Pathan period 1200—1500 A.D. and the Mughal period 1526—1857, some of them recovered from the clearances of the Qutb, the Purana Qila and other monuments in and around Delhi. Among the Pathan inscriptions, the Nagari inscription mentioning the construction of a well at the Palamba Village, the modern Palam, and recording the names of the early Pathan Sultans of Delhi, is of considerable historical interest as it records in order the names of the early Delhi Sultans upto Balban the period from 1200—1287 A.D. The Mughal inscriptions in the Museum, are mostly those found on tomb-stones but there are two inscriptions one on a stone object and another on a white marble slab which are by far more interesting records. The inscriptions on the stone object records the fact that it was the filter vessel of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Alamgir the king champion of the faith 1080 A.H. (1669-1670 A.D.). It is said that this vessel hewn out of one piece of rock was used by the Emperor for the purpose of purifying water, while in camp for his religious ablutions. The white marble slab was found in a well near the Hammam, in the Delhi Fort with an inscription in beautiful Nasak characters in a chronogram composed by Bahadur Shah II. It is a well-known fact that Bahadur Shah II was a poet of great repute with the pseudonym of Zafar. This inscription records his pseudonym. Most of the inscriptions in the Museum collection are in Persian.

Arms and Armour

The Museum has a small collection of arms and armour which includes sabres, helmets, swords daggers, etc. Among the

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sabres mention may be made of the sabre of Aurangzeb with the blade inscribed with the name of God and Ali and the mark near the hilt reading Alamgir Padshah Ghazi 1112 A.H. (*i.e.* 1700 A.D.) with a hilt not original. The Jambia (Dagger) inscribed with the name of Shah Tahmasp Safvi, king of Persia dated 947 A.H. (1540 A.D.) while recalling to us that ill-fated Mughal monarch Humayun and his friendship with this Persian ruler, also records the name of the maker, one Muzaffar Shah of Kashan, a city in Persia. It is rarely one comes across the name of the craftsman on antiquities and hence its importance. There are also some fine specimens of damascened swords and daggers in the Museum. It is a well known fact that the Emperor Akbar was very much fascinated by the art of damascening and it is said that the Emperor himself supervised the work done in the Royal armoury.

The Royal Charters

The seals in the Museum collection numbering eight or so are not of much interest, except for the one seal of the Imperial Library of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. The Royal charters, the farmans and the sanads, on the other hand throw much light on the social, economic and polititcal conditions during the time especially of the great Mughals Akbar, Jehangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The farmans of which we have more than thirty in the collection signifying Royal commands are usually applied to deeds of grants of lands, patents of rank and similar other documents which required the Imperial Seal. They usually begin with a dedication such as the Bismillah (In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate and so on). Below the dedication, but above the body of the document came what is called the Tughra, which gave the name of the King in ornamental characters and then the Great Seal. These Great Seals gave the name of the ruling Emperors in the middle. On the reverse of these Royal charters, we find extracts from the State records, relating to the patent or grant and notes regarding the checking of the Farmans, Seals of Officials who dealt with the case, the order for the affixing of the Great Seal. In short a perusal of these charters shows how complicated the administrative procedures were and the elaborate system of checking and registration which was in vogue during the palmy days of the Mughal Empire. The earlier Mughal Farmans were written on plain paper but the later documents developed into gorgeous illuminated documents without the business-like endorsements, which were found on the early Mughal charters. The earliest Farman in the collection is dated in the fifth year of the reign of the Emperor Akbar, recording the grant of land and cash for the maintenance of a tomb at Sohna, a village in the Gurgaon district.

The Art of Calligraphy

While these Royal charters throw light on the elaborate administrative machinery of the Mughals, the calligraphy specimens, in the collection, reveal an entirely different aspect, the artistic tastes of the Mughals, their patronage of the fine arts, of which the art of writing had an unrivall-

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ed place during their time. It was customary, for the Moghul Emperors to teach calligraphy to their Princes, together with other fine arts and Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of the Emperor Shahjahan enjoyed great fame for his penmanship. He was a master in that art, as a specimen of his calligraphy in the Museum would testify, his master being that great calligraphist Abdul Rashid Dailmi whom the Emperor Shahjahan held in great esteem on account of his skill in penmanship. The Museum collection of over eighty specimens has a good number of works by famous calligraphists like Abdul Rahim entitled Anbarin Qalam a reknowned calligraphist of the court of Jehangir, Muhammad Musa of the court of Mohammad Shah and also of Mir Panja Kash of the reign of Bahadur Shah II and specimens of the calligraphy of the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II himself. A few of the calligraphy specimens are on display in the main gallery of the Museum.

The Manuscripts

A fairly good collection of manuscripts are available in the Museum of which twelve have been exhibited in the main gallery. The Manuscripts are, a good number of them, copies of the Quran, of special interest being a pocket Quran exhibited in the gallery, and Firdausi's Shahnama, of the 16th Century A.D. The earliest manuscript and incidentally the earliest illustrated one in the collection, is the Timur-Nama dated 894 A.H. (1488-89 A.D.) of one Maulana Abdulla Hatifi, Sairul Manazil, Laila Majnu and Yusuf Zulaikha of Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami are a few other noteworthy items.

Paintings and Portraits

The collection includes over two hundred paintings, portraits etc. the paintings belonging mostly to that period *i.e.* between the 16th to the end of the 19th century A.D. when Mughal miniature painting was developed at the Mughal courts under Akbar and his successors. Some of these painted portraits of Mughal emperors, in the collection are exquisite works of art. The Mughal emperor Jehangir, was a great lover of birds and animals and special attention was paid to their portraiture during his time under the inspiring leadership of the famous artist Ustad Mansur, to whom are due some of the delightful animal and bird studies. Among the paintings of the Jehangir period in the collection mention may be made of the painting ascribed to Govardan, and a fish by Ustad Mansur. The latter has an endorsement said to have been made by the emperor himself "An Arabian Sea fish painted by Nadir-ul-Asar Ustad Mansur". In addition to the paintings, portraits are available of fifteen Mughal emperors and also of Red Fort monuments.

Other Art Objects

The Museum has also a small collection of minor art objects, some of them very artistically made, as for instance, the ivory boxes, jade and Mother of Pearl objects. During the Mughal period, extensive use was made of Elephant ivory and apart from that of what was known as Machili-ka-dant or fish tooth which was a kind of fossilised ivory stronger and smoother than the elephant ivory. This was more highly prized for use as sword and dagger hilts, as is evident from the study of the swords and

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daggers in the collection. Walrus ivory imported from foreign countries was also evidently in use. In fact ivory carving seems to have been exquisitely done under the patronage of the Mughals. In addition to these ivory objects, most of which are on display in the galleries, a Cardamom tray and a powder flask in Mother of Pearl on display in the galleries are monumental proofs of the craftsmanship during the Mughal period. A horn powder flask said to be the private property of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II, is another beautiful work of art also on display.

Of the jade pieces in the collection mention may be made of a mirror frame, trefoil scent box, a beautiful Koran stand, a jade powder flask of the 18th and 19th Centuries A.D., on display in the main gallery which are beautifully carved with floral motifs and each a work of art by itself. These jade pieces are mostly of the jadite variety. It is said that jade was imported from China and perhaps the art of jade carving also came from that country. The Mughal Emperor Jehangir, it is said, had possessed jade articles of excellent quality. In addition to these ivory, Mother of Pearl, jade objects there are also a few bidriware specimens, metalware etc. of not much significance.

Publications

So much for the collection. There are a number of publication on the Museum objects of which mention may be made of the catalogue of the Delhi Museum of Archaeology, 1926, catalogue of the coins in the Delhi Museum of Archaeology, monograph specimens of calligraphy in the Delhi Museum of Archaeology by Khan Sahib Maulvi Zafar Hasan 1926, No. 29 Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India. The inscriptions of the Museum have been published in the Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica 1913-1914, and Epigraphia, India, Arabic and Persian supplement 1959-60.

The Museum has a small collection of about two hundred books which are made available for reference on requisition. Antiquities are also loaned out for a short period to educational and research institutions on application. A historical Site Museum, it is under the Museum administrative control of Museums Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India, which has its headquarters at the Indian Museum, Calcutta and there is a Curator in charge of it.

This small Site Museum has made a long headway during the fifty years of its existence during which time the collection has been considerably augmented. To a student of history or to a layman, the Museum affords a glimpse through its collection on display etc. and in the reserve collection into the past, a glorious epoch of Indian history, and unravelling as it does through its antiquities the marvels of that great epoch, the artistic tastes of the Mughals, their patronage of the fine arts their administrative machinery and so on. Housed as it is, in one of the very buildings which had witnessed in turn the heyday and the decline of the Mughal, and which is an ideal site amidst the splendour of the Mughal monuments and gardens, the Archaeological Museum, Red Fort Delhi is well-worth a visit.

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INDIAN WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

R. N. Dwivedi

As one enters the historic Red Fort, he imperceptibly gets in communion with the entire cavalcade of history, a blood-red history of nefarious wars, internecine wars of succession between Dara Shikoh, Murad and Aurangzeb, wars brought to the walls of Delhi by marauders like Nadirshah and Ahmed Shah Abdali, wars that transplanted an alien ensign on the ramparts of the Red Fort, wars that tried in vain to dislodge that ensign, wars that were fought by many a Nicholson to regain their footholds on the Red Fort and lastly the struggles that inspired a re-awakened nation to 'March to Delhi' to hoist the national tri-colour on the Red Fort.

A visit to Naubat Khana

The treatment of the foyer brings about the correct temperamental background and the visitors undergo complete mental reconditioning when they climb their way up to the Naubat Khana (Drum Rooms) within the archaeological area of the Red Fort, housing the Indian War Memorial Museum.

Trophies of the First World War

This Museum was established in 1919 just after the First World War (1914—18). The purpose of this Museum was to exhibit the collections of war trophies particularly those collected from Messopotamia, East Africa, Egypt and the North-West Frontiers, where Indian armies fought on the side of the British. These collections also include pictures, photographs, regimental badges, Turkish officers' uniforms, Arab daggers, German technical instruments, stamps, coins and currency notes etc. The Museum commands a grand view of the Diwan-e-am and the vicinity and the visitors that flock to the Red Fort and climb their way up to this Museum, have a look at these curious arms and ammunitions of the First World War as also a bird's eye view of the vicinity from the windows of this Museum.

Administration and Location

The Museum is under the control of the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, who is the ex-officio President of the Museum. An allocation is made by the Ministry of Education through the Chief Commissioner for the upkeep and maintenance of the Museum. It has an annual budget allocation of Rs. 22,000 only. The Museum is looked after by a curator, one clerk and about half a dozen attendants and chowkidars.

Since the Museum is located within the archaeological area of the Red Fort, visitors have to pay a fee of 20 paise per head for entering the area. However, no extra fee is charged from them for visiting this Museum. The Museum is suitably located

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and the average number of visitors aggregates to three thousand per day and over seven lakhs in a year.

National War Museum

The collections in the Museum are presented by the Ministry of Defence. There is an ample scope for further development of this Museum and its story can be extended to the Second World War and even to the last Indo-Pakistan conflict. The scope may further be enlarged by reconstructing the story of major historical wars fought on this sub-continent and thus converting it into a National War Museum. This will thus present a panorama of the development of war machine on this sub-continent, a graphic story of the evolution of deadly weapons from the stone-age onwards as also the development of Indian military strategy through the ages. At the present moment the scope of these collections is very limited and the interest of the visitors can be enlarged by widening the scope of this small Museum.

Changed Outlook

Since 1962, there is a change in the general outlook about war in this country and a comprehensive War Museum is bound to arouse an abiding interest among our people. Even at present, people are evincing a very keen interest in such exhibitions as could be testified by the large crowds visiting 'Meet the Challenge' exhibition at the L.I.C. grounds. Such exhibitions can be brought on a permanent footing by enlarging the scope of this Museum.

Educating the Masters

The nucleus collections of this Museum could thus be enlarged to meet these latest needs of acquainting our people with the latest developments in our war machine. It is on record that the curiosity of our people about things military knows no bounds now and this Museum (with its enlarged scope) can be a sure medium to quench their thirst about military equipments and other developments in this field. After all, our people are the real strength of our Defence Forces and we should satisfy their legitimate aspiration as far as possible and practicable. Any equipment or apparatus used by our Armed forces if it is not a 'military secret' can be put on view in this War Museum. Moreover, in this democratic set-up even our Armed Forces wish to acquaint our people with the difficulties that they are facing in their onerous duties at high altitudes and elsewhere. An intimate knowledge of things is bound to bring about understanding and appreciation of the problems and excite sympathy among the people.

Attitudes to War and Peace

A war, because of the ruin it seeks to perpetrate both on the winner and the vanquished, is to be abhored. There is indeed very little that one would like to remember and cherish about a war. And to think of a War Memorial Museum and much less of developing it into a National War Museum is an idea that would not enlist popular support. Moreover during the last three decades or so, under the stirring guidance of the Father of the Nation, we as a Nation had been taught to think of violence as an abominable phenomenon, both psychological or physical, that we have to eschew from our body politic. As such India today is an essen-

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tially peace-loving country with no territorial ambition.

History through Wars

Nevertheless, the facts of history can never be forgotten. Much of India's history, Hindu, Muslim or British, can be successfully related through the various battles fought on its soil. And a museum that aims at presenting the facts of the wars fought in India, will definitely stage a visual cavalcade of unprecedented fascination and of most invigorating interest. If an epic about the great battle of Mahabharat or a poem on the War between Rama and Ravana can arouse the deepest interest of our masses, there is no reason why a Museum having a section each on Mahabharata and the war between Rama and Ravana and dealing with other major wars of India in their political, military and cultural perspective, will not stir among the visitors most reverential memories of their past glory. And for similar reasons, if the deepest and most devoted studies of Mahabharata and Ramayana have not turned us into hysterical war fanatics, there is no reason why a War Museum could be expected to make us more war-minded than what we are today.

A Comprehensive War or Defence Museum

On the other hand the advantages of having a comprehensive War Museum in the capital are legion. The advantage does not lie only in turning out a comparatively neglected and unknown museum into a Museum of national importance, but such a Museum, depicting its story with archaeological finds, specimens of ancient arms and ammunitions, charts, diagrams, drawings, pictures and dioramas, is bound to arouse the deepest interest among our people. It will also provide the students of Indian history not only with the dry dates of these wars and battles, but with a lively visual panorama of these events, which will have an indelible impact upon their minds such as cannot be achieved by the pondering over hundreds of pages of scholarly books of history.

Scheme and Details

Once the idea is accepted, the complete scheme of this Museum could be worked out without any difficulty. To give a very rough outline, the sections of this Museum may be divided as follows: Prehistoric and Stone age Wars, Vedic Wars, Wars of the Epic era, the Mauryan Wars, the Wars of Sungas and Satvahanas and others, the Wars of the Gupta age, the Wars of later Hindu period, the South Indian Wars, the Pathan Wars, the Moghul Wars, wars of the British (with suitable sub-divisions), the First World War, the Second World War, the struggle of Independence particularly that of the I. N. A., the Indo-Chinese Border skirmishes and the Indo-Pakistan Conflict. The broad organisations of our Defence Forces may also be presented separately.

A Project of two Ministries

Such a Museum can be started only with complete co-operation between our two Ministries of Education and Defence and as a matter of fact this is a project not only to be shared and fostered by both of these Ministries but it would demand their continued interest and devotion. While the Ministry of Education will have to run this Museum as a Museum of national importance, the Ministry of Defence will have to feed this Museum from time to time.

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GANDHI MEMORIAL MUSEUM & LIBRARY

During the whole of his revolutionary career in India, extending over a period of about thirty fruitful years, Mahatma Gandhi lived a life of voluntary poverty and non-possession, identifying himself with the least of his fellow countrymen and coveting nothing that would deprive another of his need. As such he has left behind him little in the way of wordly goods to enrich museums and keep alive the memory of his earthly life. His richest and only bequest—not only to us but to all humanity—are the great and life-changing ideas for which he fought all along and in defence of which he ultimately laid down his life in the fulness of his manhood.

The Beginnings of the Museum

The beginnings of the Museum in Delhi go back to the fateful months of 1948, soon after the assassination of the Mahatma, when a whole nation woke up as if from stupor to realize that their most precious possession was gone. The slow process of scouting for, collecting and preserving the basic materials that would go into the Museum began in a small, unostentatious way in Bombay. Later the work was continued in Delhi and in early 1951 a small museum was set up in the hutments adjoining Kotah House. Later still, in mid-1957, it was shifted to the picturesque old mansion at 5, Mansingh Road.

The new permanent house of the Museum, to which it was finally taken in 1959, is the two-storeyed building of simple outlines which stands within view of the Gandhi Samadhi at Rajghat. Situated strategically at a point where the old walled city ends and the new begins, the Museum now commands an unobstructed view of the three roads that lead to New India's greatest place of pilgrimage.

The Sangrahalaya was formally inaugurated on 31st January, 1961, by late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of Independent India and one of the closest associates of Gandhiji.

Photostat Copies of Correspondences

In each of the two floors of the Museum, on either side of the foyer and stairway, are two swept-back wings. The one on the left as you enter, houses the library and the reading room. In this largest single Gandhi library of its kind

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there are at present about 12,000 volumes, including files of the remarkable weekly journals in various languages which Gandhi founded and edited for well over two decades and a large collection of photostats and microfilms of his voluminous correspondence (aggregating 30,000).

Documentaries on Gandhi

In the right wing is a little auditorium where Gandhi documentaries are shown to visitors during the week-ends. There are two major feature-length documentaries in our collection "THE VOICE OF INDIA", and "MAHATMA GANDHI—THE TWENTIETH CENTURY PROPHET", an American production. Some shorter documentaries produced by the Gandhi Films Committee, the Films Division and Khadi Commission are also shown.

His Personal Relics

The two wings on the upper floor house the museum proper. Here in loving care are preserved some of the few but rare relics of the Master's earthly memory—the urn which contained his ashes, the bloodstained clothes of his martyrdom, one of the assassin's bullets that took his life, his psalm book and some of his simple, inexpensive personal belongings that are a constant source of reverence and inspiration of every visitor, however sophisticated or humble.

Life Story in Pictures

Here also is the story of his eventful life told in pictures, with the help of a careful selection of historic photographs and some fine paintings an exhibition of charkhas (spinning wheels) from various countries; and an assortment of other Gandhi memorabilia of various kinds. Occasional extramural Gandhi exhibitions are organized at key centres both within Delhi and outside.

The Delhi Museum functions also as the Central Museum. It is a repository which holds custody and arranges for the preservation of the bulk of Gandhiana. The Central Board of Gandhi Memorial Museums has its headquarters in the premises of the Museum.

Perpetuating His Memory

While declaring open the Gandhi Museum at Sabarmati, Ahmedabad, Pandit Jawharlal Nehru said:

You cannot confine Gandhiji into the four corners of a memorial centre. In a way the whole of India is a Sangrahalaya. The future generations may not have a real idea of the great work and personality of Gandhiji by these pictures and letters. May be some great writer later on may be able to give an idea of the great revolution that Gandhiji brought about in our country and how he put life into a half-dead people, brought light into their eyes and made them walk with their head high and ultimately brought freedom. But the future generations will perhaps never know the real Gandhiji as we knew him who worked under his leadership and guidance.

It is thus to a perpetuation of these ideas by visual and auditory means, as much as to the preservation of his personal relics, correspondence and growing literature on him that the Gandhi Memorial Museum in New Delhi is basically oriented.

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NEHRU MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The Nehru Memorial Museum was inaugurated by President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan on 14th November, 1964, in the Teen Murti House which has been dedicated to the memory of Jawaharlal Nehru. During the sixteen years he lived in this house there was hardly a day—when he was in town—when hundreds of people did not come to see him. He had become, as he put it himself, one of the tourist attractions of the capital. However busy he was, he found time to greet these groups of visitors and to say a word or two to them.

Incessant Chain of Visitors

After Nehru's death the Teen Murti House has continued to draw visitors. During the last twelve months, more than a million persons have visited it; it is not uncommon to have four thousand visitors on week days, and ten thousand on Sundays and holidays. On 14th November, 1965, the 76th birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru, the number of visitors was 30,000. Among these visitors are not only high dignitaries and foreign tourists, but people from every walk of life and every part of India; doctors, lawyers, merchants, artisans, factory workers, school teachers, and little children, wide-eyed villagers with beddings on their heads, young women with babies in their arms and old people bent double with age. Curiosity, sadness, pride and reverence mingle in their faces, as they walk through the silent corridors of this legend-filled house.

Study and Bedroom

The eastern wing of Teen Murti House has been converted into the Museum Wing. Some rooms, particularly the study-*cum*-office and the bedroom used by Jawaharlal Nehru have been preserved exactly as they were on the day of his death. The study is full of books which he bought or selected from those presented to him. Everything seems to be in its proper place. On the table may be seen a picture of Gandhiji, a small statue of the Buddha, and a copy of the Bhagavad Gita. On the study table also rests a bronze cast of the right-hand of

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Abraham Lincoln presented to Jawaharlal Nehru by an American educationist. "It is a beautiful hand," he said of this gift, "strong and firm and yet gentle. . . . I look at it every day and it gives me great strength.".

The bedroom is strikingly simple and, like the study, shows his love of books and orderliness. An HMT wrist watch given to him when he visited the factory at Bangalore years ago, a pencil, and a writing pad lie on a side-table. There are a number of photographs—of his father, his wife, his daughter, sisters, nieces and grandsons. And dominating, the entire room as it were, is a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Reconstructed Office-Room

One of the most interesting exhibits in the Nehru Memorial Museum is Nehru's office room at the External Affairs Ministry, which has been reconstructed by bringing over the furniture and other articles he used there. The diary shows the appointments which he had fixed for 27th May, 1964, but which fate did not allow him to fulfil. On the office table are placed a number of small stones which he collected and used as paper-weights.

Unique Exhibits

Some of the gifts received by Nehru in the course of his travels abroad or visits of foreign statesmen and delegations to India may be seen in two rooms on the first floor. Also on view are the academic degrees awarded to him by Indian and foreign universities a number of commemorative medals and the "keys" of various cities and the "Bharat Ratna"—the highest award which any Indian citizen can receive. His 'Will' in all the Indian languages is another exquisite exhibit that attracts the attention of all the visitors.

Apart from the rooms and exhibits permanently on view in the Nehru Museum, a number of special exhibitions have been arranged. The first of these was opened on 14th November, 1964; the second on 26th January, 1965; the third exhibition entitled "The Last Two Years" synchronised with Jawaharlal Nehru's first death anniversary on May 27, 1965. On 15th August, 1965, an exhibition on the theme of independence was inaugurated, and on 16th October, "The Nehru on Food" Exhibition was organised as part of the world-wide "Freedom from Hunger Campaign".

An exhibition entitled "Freedom's Battle," which opened on 14th November, 1965, is built around a "prison cell" photographically reconstructed out of pictures taken mostly in the jails in which Jawaharlal Nehru was lodged. On the panels is depicted the story of this family of freedom fighters, and Jawaharlal's thoughts and memories of prison life. Along the walls of the room may be seen inspiring extracts from his speeches and writings. All the words are Jawaharlal's own. A number of original pictures and documents have been displayed for the first time.

The Prison Cell

Inside the "prison cell" is the original manuscript of the *Discovery of India* written in 1944 in jail—in Ahmednagar Fort. Translations of the book in various languages are on view in an adjacent room.

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Probably the most moving document in the Nehru Memorial Museum is the testament of Jawaharlal Nehru, particularly the concluding paragraph in which he asked for his ashes to be scattered from the air into "the fields where the peasants of India toil, so that they might mingle with the dust and soil of India and become an indistinguishable part of India." And his epitaph on himself is inscribed on a piece of rock below the tree under which he loved to sit during his last days: ".... if any people choose to think of me, then I should like them to say: "This was a man who with all his mind and heart, loved India and the Indian people. And they, in turn, were indulgent to him and gave him of their love most abundantly and extravagantly."

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